

MARK SZYBIST: My name is Mark Szybist, I'm a senior program advocate in the energy and transportation program for the National Defense Council based in Washington, D.C. On a personal note, I grew up in Williamsport, Pennsylvania. I have two great grandfathers who mined coal, and before moving to DC, I lived in Wilkes-Barre, Pennsylvania within several minutes of several coal mines. We would like to thank Secretary Jewell for her leadership in causing the review of this Federal Coal Leasing Program. I'm here today because NDC has a long history working on coal mining dating back to the passage of SMCRA. In 2011 we commissioned the first audit of the Federal Coal Leasing Program in 30 years. The ensuing report was Tomsend's greatest reward, which found that over those three decades the coal program short changed taxpayers by almost \$30 billion. Many have commented on the flaws of the current program. Last week Senator Maria Cantwell of Washington noted that coal on federal land in Montana had sold for an average of 12 cents a ton, "33 tons of coal for the price of a big mac." Last week the President's Council of Economic Advisors released a report on the program. President Obama's top environmental advisor Ryan East summarized it this way. "This is a hard look at the economics and what we see is a program that even before getting through the environmental considerations is not serving the interests of taxpayers." But you are all aware of this and that's why you are here today. So what changes would we like to see? NDC believes that America's federal lands and waters are a national commons to be managed for the common good of all Americans. In the 21st century that is not what we would call leasing. It scars our landscapes and hinders the crucial shift to clean energy. We support a phase-out of fossil fuel leases on federal lands starting with a phase-out of new leases and no renewal of non-producing leases. Short of that, we would like to see the public put first. BLM should be in firm control of when, where and how coal, federal coal, is leased, not coal companies. The agency should lease only when, one, it can ensure areas for lease are low conflicts on wildlife, air, water and protected lands. Also, the coal-mined methane is captured. Two, coal companies have demonstrated less than 10 years in business; three, coal companies need measurable and enforceable standards for reclaiming mined lands. The scope of the review should be extended to include OSM. And four, taxpayers will get a fair return to coal soil. That means cutting out captive transactions, substantially raising minimum bids and eliminating royalty rate reductions. Last, but not least, BLM needs to align

coal policies with our national climate goals. This can be achieved in part by raising royalty rates, finding increased royalties should be used to help communities transition to more sustainable economies. Thank you very much.